



Sudbury Silk Mills  
Responsibility Report  
2024/25



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

**Sudbury Silk Mills is a family-run weaving mill based in Sudbury, Suffolk. The mill has been at the forefront of silk weaving and an integral part of the British textile industry for over 300 years.**

Sudbury Silk Mills is a jacquard weaving manufacturer. The entire production process, from design concept and development, yarn dyeing, warping, weaving to finished fabric can be followed through the factory.

While customer activity and fabric development are managed independently by each specialist business team, non-commercial activities such as sustainability and social responsibility are managed more cooperatively.

Sudbury Silk Mills weaves exclusively for the companies Stephen Walters, David Walters and Humphries Weaving. The three companies bring a huge textile heritage and unique expertise to the mill.

Stephen Walters specialises in luxury apparel and accessories fabrics; David Walters focuses on the wholesale market with high-end interior fabrics; Humphries Weaving works across bespoke interiors and historical recreations.

We recognise our role as custodians of traditional artisan skills and our integral part of the continued evolution of British textile manufacturing on the global stage.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

## INTRODUCTION

“Recognising the importance of sustainable textile production and the scale of the commitment involved, Sudbury Silk Mills has adopted a structured and systematic approach to address the challenges in this area.

A steering group provides overall strategic direction to a network of project teams or working groups. To improve our environmental management and environmental performance, to enhance our responsibility.

Membership to these groups is open to all members of staff throughout the business, based solely on merit. Drawing together colleagues with the passion, skills, and capability from all areas. Benefiting from this wide depth of knowledge and experience, to deliver significant improvements in the sustainability of the company. Sustainability that protects our natural environment, human and ecological health, while driving innovation and delivering a positive benefit to our way of life.

We recognise the value that certifications or accreditations such as OEKO-TEX® STeP can bring, especially in a landscape crowded with competing, branded, and often subscription-based options. We actively encourage a more holistic approach, to make progress as an industry in line with global commitments.

It is a great privilege to be recognised with a Kings Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development, representing excellence and demonstrating the outstanding achievements of our team. Sustainable development helps to future-proof the business. Such practices often lead to greater efficiency and resilience, and drive innovation in products, services, and operations.

Our approach towards environmental and social responsibility is increasingly valued by our clients and wider communities. Such a prestigious honour instils a strong sense of pride and a shared sense of achievement across our organisation.”



**Julius Walters - Managing Director**

# Improvement strategy and governance

Our continuous improvement approach is imbedded in the way we work, and our people recognise the part they play in this every day.

Our level organisational structure enables a distributed, rather than hierarchical leadership. The team are aligned to a clear improvement strategy with a focus on quality, productivity, responsibility and people.

Steering and working groups comprised of volunteer members from across the business, deliver substantial improvements company wide. Moreover, every individual has direct control, independence, and autonomy over their own departmental improvements in relation to these four aspects.

The leadership team set the long-term strategic direction and near-term priorities of the business. They support these ambitions through targeted departmental tactical plans and coaching of their teams. They ensure that resources are made available for improvement work, alongside the routine operation of the business.

They carry out audits of the performance and functionality of the business strategy delivery systems and processes.

# Responsibility Goals and Targets



**WASTE** - We seek to eliminate operational waste completely and ensure that all by-products are repurposed. Organic waste may be composted, and materials that can be reused must be reclaimed.



**CARBON** - We seek to emit net zero GHGs from our own operational activities, including energy we consume.



**SUPPLY CHAIN** - Natural Resources (such as yarns) are managed to safeguard communities, animals and ecosystems and to ensure that products do not harm the natural environment. Suppliers must reduce their carbon footprint as fast as possible, aligning or exceeding national targets, legislation, or our Sudbury Silk Mills Roadmaps.



**ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL GOVERNANCE** - Publicly report in line with task force on climate related financial disclosures for SME's.

We provide qualitative and quantitative data in line with TCFD recommendations, aiming to include this reporting within our financial statement by 2027. Backed by independent third-party reviews, including an energy audit and decarbonisation plan (2022) and OEKO-TEX® Step audit and certification (2023).

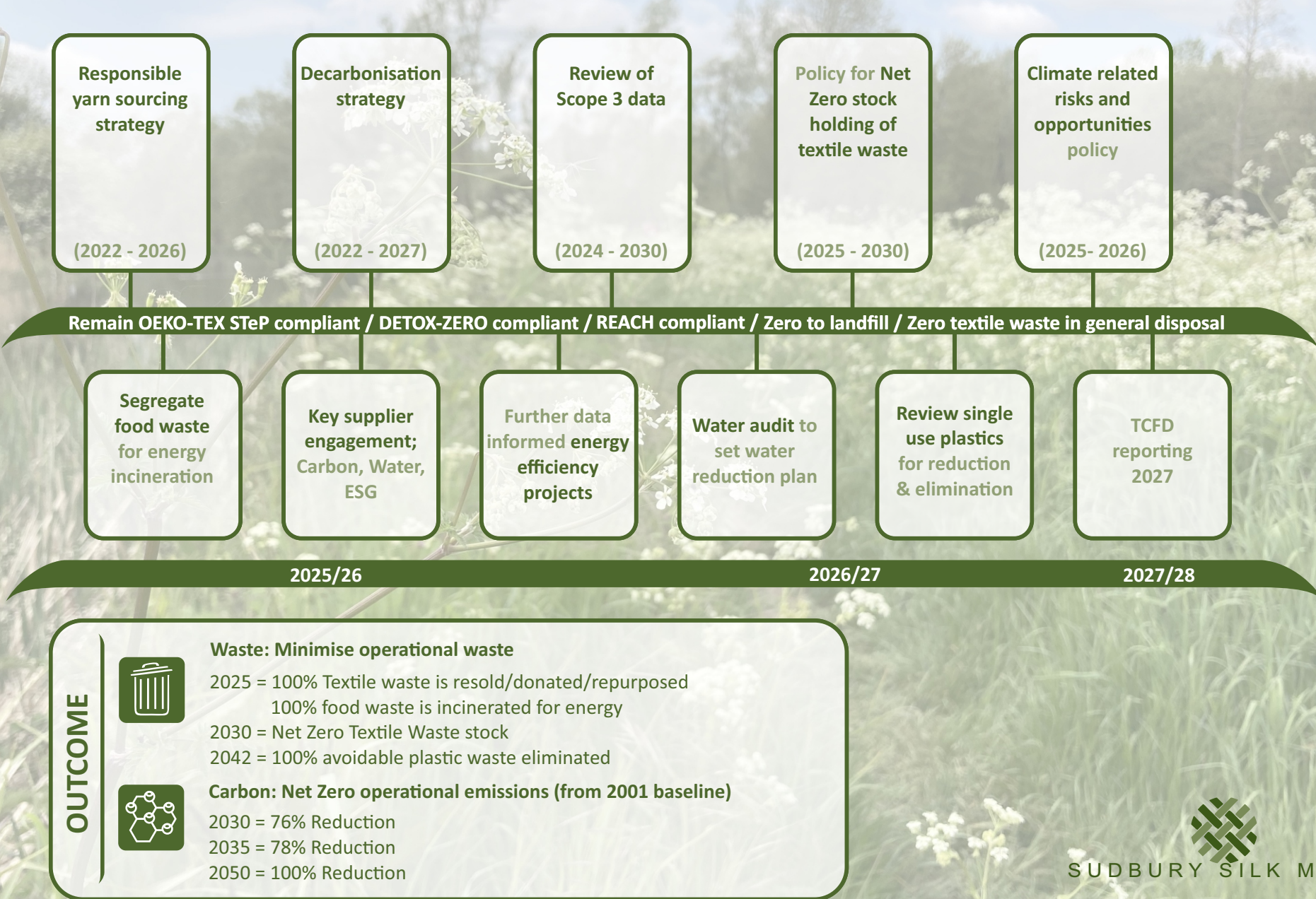
We follow GHG protocols, measuring our scope 1+2 carbon footprint via the Carbon Trust for SMEs. Our scope 3 carbon footprint was independently assessed and followed the UK Gov conversion factors 2022.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Our Responsibility Roadmap

Sharing our key goals and targets.



## Sudbury Silk Mills has been honoured with a King's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development.

Announced on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 the King's Awards for Enterprise recognises outstanding UK businesses. The Award programme, now in its 59th year, is the most prestigious business award in the country, with successful businesses able to use the esteemed King's Awards Emblem for the next five years. Sudbury Silk Mills has led the way in responsible manufacturing and is OEKO-TEX STeP® accredited, operating to the highest industry standard. Credit to our highly skilled and passionate team for this success; they have achieved this by reducing our carbon footprint and environmental impact, as well as sourcing responsibly and eliminating waste, including recycling 100% of all textile by-products.



### Charlotte Bainbridge (Humphries Account Manager)



*"I've always believed that responsibility on any level makes a difference, and I've long been an advocate for slow production and against wasteful, fast textile production. From my time as a student through to nine years in the industry, I've seen how much still needs to change—and how disheartening some of the practices can be. That's why working at Humphries feels so positive: not only is it a creative environment, but it's one where sustainability and ethics are genuinely part of the day-to-day thinking and actions. It's exciting to be part of a company that's always looking to improve and evolve, and to be surrounded by like-minded people who care about doing things in the most positive way for people and the planet."*

### Beth Humes (Stephen Walters Account Manager)



*"Our customer base is the luxury end of the market, and their expectation is that we are both anticipating the demands of their end customer, whilst meeting industry sustainability standards. Our goal is always to strive for more, to exceed our customer's expectations and be a positive force for change. It's a real privilege for the efforts of the team to be recognised: the approach of sustainable production has become part of our everyday now, it's in everything we do, so to receive the award is an honour. Personally, it's hugely important for me to work for an employer who champions responsible manufacturing, it gives me great pride."*

### Emma Collings (David Walters Account Manager and Sustainability Lead)



*"I am incredibly proud we have been recognised as a business by such a prestigious award for sustainable development. It's wonderful to see the energy behind sustainability gain momentum within the business to become an aspect we all contribute towards, enabling us to achieve our goals. As a member of the mills' sustainability team, I am thrilled to continue driving projects as part of our ongoing sustainability development journey."*

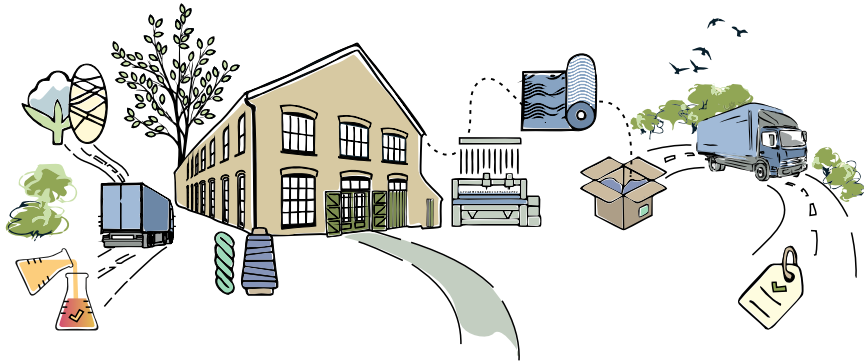


SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# OEKO-TEX STeP

We set demanding goals regarding environmental protection, social responsibility and our commitment in the field of sustainable production conditions.

We are proud to be the first UK Textile Manufacturer to be awarded OEKO-TEX® STeP certification, achieving the highest level 3, which demonstrates ideal implementation of best practice.



OEKO-TEX® STeP is an independent certification system that allows us to communicate our environmental measures externally in a credible and transparent way. STeP stands for Sustainable Textile & Leather Production and certifies the manufacturing process for environmentally friendly and socially responsible production facilities.

OEKO-TEX® Sustainable Textile & Leather Production (STeP) standard aims to promote environmentally friendly production processes throughout the textile and leather supply chain. The standard applies to facilities at all processing stages of textiles and leather production. STeP differs from other standards because it includes comprehensive analysis of overall production conditions (environment, safety, social and efficiency), rather than individual or isolated aspects.



The requirements and criteria for STeP certification are specially adapted to the significant challenges of the textile, leather, and clothing industry.

1. Chemical management
2. Environmental performance
3. Environmental management
4. Social responsibility
5. Quality management
6. Health protection and safety at work



STeP

# DETOX TO ZERO

OEKO-TEX® DETOX TO ZERO strives to eliminate hazardous chemicals from textile and leather production. It is not a certification, but a management system determining and analysing compliance of chemicals on the Manufacturing Restricted Substances List that are used in textile and leather production. The system reports the conformity status and outlines improvements.

DETOX TO ZERO helps manufacturers and purchasers, as well as brands and retailers, monitor and fulfil the Greenpeace Detox Campaign objectives. The system targets wet facilities in the textile and leather industry supply chains. Due to our OEKO-TEX® STeP assessed low wastewater volumes, DETOX TO ZERO is no longer applicable to us.

## OEKO-TEX® STeP Certification of production facilities

STeP provides a more comprehensive analysis and evaluation of sustainable production conditions. Many certification systems only consider certain individual aspects of sustainability.

The certification demonstrates we are actively working to minimise our risks, reduce resource consumption and environmental impact, and create a safe attractive workplace for our members of staff.

Furthermore, the certificate allows us to communicate our UN SDG aligned improvements in a clear and transparent way.

Through OEKO-TEX® STeP we are actively contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), good health and wellbeing, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, reduced inequalities, responsible consumption and production and climate action.



# OEKO-TEX STeP

Phil Harris (Yarn Stores)



**How do you feel OEKO-TEX® STeP has made us more sustainable as a business?**

“We can source more ethical products. We work with a lot of companies already that have the OEKO-TEX® stamp on their things, a lot of our suppliers. If we can focus on those companies, then we know that they're also doing the right thing, and that will make us more sustainable in that sense.”

**How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?**

“Oh, I'm very proud. I think that's a very good thing, it's a symbol that says we're working properly, with the good ethics and sustainability.”

Lucy Gormley (Finance)



**How do you feel OEKO-TEX® STeP has made us more sustainable as a business?**

“More and more we hear about how the world is changing, global weather events, pollution in the oceans, sewage overflows into rivers and loss of habitat. What we do as individuals and collectively can and will make a massive difference to what happens to our world. Knowing that our business and the goods we manufacture are OEKO-TEX certified provides our customers and, in turn, their own customers reassurance that using us as a supplier means that they are also contributing to that collective change, and we are embracing this ethos.”

**How has OEKO-TEX® STeP changed your day-to-day role?**

“In my own role I'm continuing to improve on the ways we record what we do and how we do them so we can maintain the high levels expected with OEKO -TEX certification.”

**How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?**

“So proud to be a part of the team achievement; with the many collaborations and all the additional hours it's taken to get to the audit, I was overjoyed that all the hard work was rewarded.”

Clive Golding (Health & Safety Manager)



**How has OEKO-TEX® STeP changed your day-to-day role?**

“It's made me aware that just because we've had a chemical product for a long time again doesn't necessarily make it environmentally friendly to use. So, when we're coming to do COSHH assessments we're looking, closely at whether they are environmentally friendly or not really; and if they're not then we look for alternatives.”

**How did you feel when we achieved the accreditation?**

“Firstly, a sense of relief that we've achieved the accreditation. Pride for that achievement, Sudbury Silk Mills being able to give customers that fabric to use from Sudbury, which has been manufactured to a very high environmental standard. A drive to continue to improve and be better at what we do. Achieving also communicates, I feel, our excellence to our customers and the rest of the world, who might be potential customers, and hopefully it will protect our business because we've got the accreditation.”



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# People, Planet, Prosperity

**Our purpose is to grow and develop a sustainable business by behaving with integrity towards our people, our customers, our suppliers, and our wider community – while retaining employment in Sudbury.**

**People, Planet, and Prosperity are the key pillars which guide the topics we address to further our responsibility as a business.**



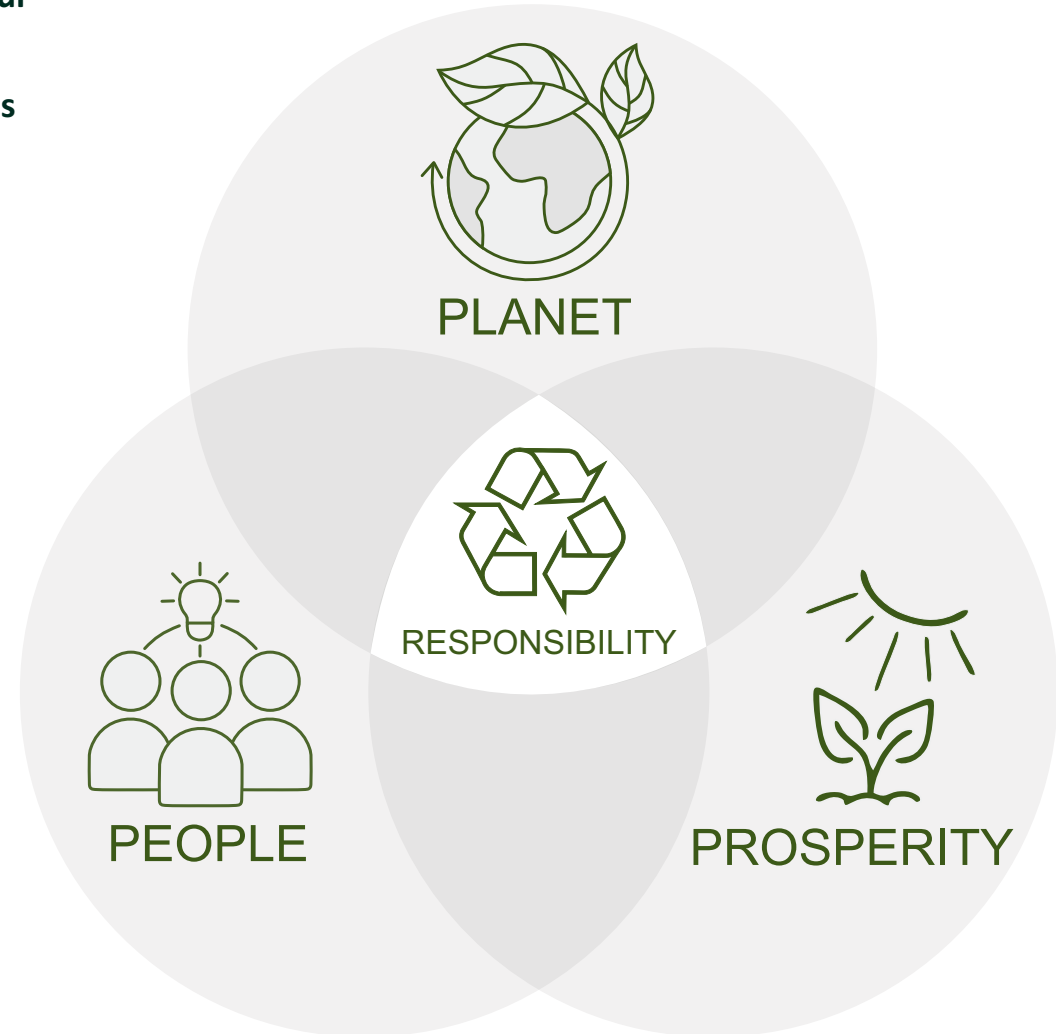
To underscore our commitment to social wellbeing by addressing key areas such as safety, health, wellbeing, training, and the promotion of equality. Our goal is to foster an environment where all individuals can thrive, supported by opportunities, an inclusive culture, and mutual respect for all employees.



We are committed to the protection of the environment by actively reducing our carbon footprint in response to climate change, whilst ensuring waste and resources are managed responsibly.



We are committed to inclusive and sustainable economic development; by creating meaningful employment opportunities, enhancing our communities, fostering innovation, and ensuring that economic progress is equally beneficial through investment and distribution.



# PEOPLE

Sudbury Silk Mills' success relies on a positively-engaged and healthy team.

Our culture and values, as represented below, guide our behaviour, decision making and priorities.

They are identified by our whole team, sharing their views about the values that are demonstrated within the business.

Everyone has a voice and autonomy to improve their area and influence the development of the wider company.

Creativity

Sustainability

Excellence

Community



## Our culture, people and social responsibility

We encourage members of staff to act fairly in their dealings with colleagues, business partners, suppliers, and the local community. We believe in a workplace free from all types of discrimination, including those based on gender, race and religion. We are proud to have a staff from diverse backgrounds and interests.

We recognise that our people determine our success, and we continue to invest in, and encourage their further development. This not only includes utilising important external training and development programmes, but also providing clear leadership and decisive action. As a board we work closely with our teams to ensure that we have the right capabilities and best talent to match our growth ambition.

Central to our approach to retain people is to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to develop within their role and the wider business. The average length of service is 12 years in 2024, with 18% of our team having more than 25 years in the business. We celebrate these incredible milestones and loyalty with long service awards. Conversely, one third of our team have joined us within the last 5 years, bringing new ideas and skills into our growing business.

We encourage the development of mastery and autonomy within roles, through internal development programmes that lead to fulfilling careers. External training is available for formal leadership and management qualifications, marketing and social media, emergency response, first aid, wellbeing, and sustainability. We offer training overseas with our machinery suppliers, with coaching and networking opportunities for those in key roles.

Last year this amounted to 2670 hours of training, this includes 7 people who have successfully completed the Institute of Leadership & Management Level 2 qualification and 3 people who have successfully completed Level 3.



**Phil Harris (Yarn Stores Team Leader)**  
“Everyone knows who you are”

“I like the fact that we work together to achieve great things, and each individual is part of the process. Good news is happily shared and rewarded. Being told you’ve done a good job is great and this extends throughout the company. After recently completing a college course, I was congratulated by the directors and managers as well as my peers, which is nice.”

# Communication

There are numerous ways in which everyone has an opportunity to have their say. Everyone can represent themselves and their department across a wide range of platforms such as departmental improvements, company-wide surveys, steering and working groups.

Improvement activities in all departments enable people to put forward and implement their ideas on how to improve working practices, including how to make the company a great place to work. Staff surveys are a great way to gather information, receive feedback and bring about positive changes company wide.



Everyone in the company contributed to the consultation that generated our values statement, which is central to our culture. Our values guide who we are, what we do and how we do it.

Our People Group facilitates our annual staff survey, weekly and monthly communication emails and engaging social events.

Our Feedback Forum is comprised of nominated members who represent colleagues from all areas. They meet to review, progress and feed back on ideas collected from suggestion boxes and other channels.

## Company Social Events



We often put on social events to bring people together, providing the opportunity to connect with colleagues on a personal level and celebrate key events. The events team consult widely to understand everyone's preferences and interests, to offer a range of events, trips, and occasions for the whole team to engage in. They have organised a hugely successful family open day, trips to sporting events, wellbeing walks, evening socials, along with fundraising bake sales and festive raffles.

The team also build links with local charities and our wider community, creating opportunities for our people to engage directly with community groups, schools, and social enterprises.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS



Marie Seabrook  
(Weaver)

"It is an open place to work, family orientated, and people get on well together. There are a variety of things organised by the Events Team like bowling, horse racing and Christmas parties; things that people enjoy for a good night out."

Michelle Beckinsale  
(Admin)

"It's great that we celebrate success. We have a profit share scheme. Last time it was announced outside, and we all had a nice little glass of champagne. I think it's lovely because you feel appreciated here. You still feel like there's a personal feel to the company. You're not a number. You're a valued person."



## Safety, Health and Environment (SHE)

Safety, Health and Environment is critical to all and a clear priority for us.

We recognise the necessity of safeguarding the physical and mental health and safety of our own people while at work. We work hard to provide a safe and comfortable working environment for staff members, visitors and the public. Our policy requires the business to manage their activities in a way that avoids causing unnecessary or unacceptable risks to health and safety.

Every month we hold a SHE committee meeting, which includes representatives from operations and administrative areas in addition to the management team, including the board of directors. The committee is chaired by the dedicated health and safety manager and environmental representative to ensure all issues are raised and appropriately actioned, with feedback and minutes posted on all bulletin boards.

Health support is provided by a local occupational health provider, and we provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Regular training is carried out for first aid, fire marshals, environmental spillages, forklift truck operators, those working at height, and we have a large 'toolbox talk' library for all teams to include in their regular team briefings.

# Wellbeing

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a benefit designed to help people deal with personal or professional challenges that could be affecting their home or work life, their health or general wellbeing. This is in addition to the regular wellbeing training for all members of staff and managers.

The programme provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. Proactive and preventative support to deliver the best possible outcome to life challenges, with immediate support available without delay, when someone needs it most.

## Salaries and Benefits

Salaries and benefits are reviewed annually. Every role is benchmarked, using market data and an independent service provider. Every individual is encouraged to develop their skills and capability, setting, and reviewing these plans in personal development reviews and regular one-to-ones with their managers. We regularly review our benefits offer, to ensure we are offering the most relevant and advantageous package to our people.

up to  
**33**  
days holiday  
per year, inc.  
bank holidays

up to  
**100%**  
of the cost of  
training for course  
that benefit the  
business and  
individual

£ %  
annual company  
profit share

access to support  
**24/7**  
with issues affecting  
your health or well  
being through the  
EAP programme



# Human rights and ethics

**Our culture is one of integrity, openness and accountability. We recognise the importance our customers place on social and environmental responsibility and we share that vision.**

## Why commit to the ETI Base Code?

[www.ethicaltrade.org](http://www.ethicaltrade.org)



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>Employment is freely chosen</b></p> <p>Slavery and bonded labour are totally unacceptable. Almost 21 million people are victims of forced labour.</p>                                                |  <p><b>Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected</b></p> <p>Tens of thousands of workers lose their jobs every year for attempting to form or join a trade union or improve working conditions. Some even lose their lives.</p> |  <p><b>Working conditions are safe and hygienic</b></p> <p>An estimated 2.3 million people die every year from work-related accidents and diseases.</p>                           |
|  <p><b>Child labour shall not be used</b></p> <p>168 million children work to support their families, missing out on education and often damaging their health. This reinforces the cycle of poverty.</p> |  <p><b>Living wages are paid</b></p> <p>Roughly half the world's population still lives on two dollars a day. If people can't feed their families on an adult's wage they may send their children to work.</p>                                                  |  <p><b>Working hours are not excessive</b></p> <p>Long working hours are the norm for most of the world's workers. This damages people's health and undermines family life.</p> |
|  <p><b>No discrimination is practised</b></p> <p>Women and certain minorities are often confined to the lowest-paid jobs with no access to training or promotion.</p>                                     |  <p><b>Regular employment is provided</b></p> <p>Most workers can be laid off when it suits the employer. This fuels poverty and insecurity and drives down wages.</p>                                                                                          |  <p><b>No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed</b></p> <p>Few workers have protection against physical, verbal or sexual abuse in the workplace.</p>                          |

Our human rights and labour conditions policy reflects the core requirements of the universal declaration of human rights, the UN global compact, the OECD guiding principles and the ILO declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work. This includes the conventions relating to forced labour, child labour, non-discrimination, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining.

We established the core structure to ensure that Sudbury Silk Mills complies with legislative and regulatory requirements while permitting it to tailor its approach to its needs. We do not tolerate practices that contravene international standards.

We embrace our responsibility for ensuring that human rights considerations are integral to the way in which existing operations and new opportunities are developed and managed.

Compliance with, and respect for, these fundamental principles is integrated throughout our organisation and the organisations we work with. Everyone working as part of Sudbury Silk Mills is responsible for having due regard for human rights. Managers and supervisors must provide leadership that promotes human rights as an equal priority to other business issues. All our people are responsible for ensuring that their own actions do not impair the human rights of others, and are encouraged to bring forward, in confidence, any concerns they may have about human rights.

## International Labour Organization (ILO)

At Sudbury Silk Mills we are committed to ensuring ethical practices in all that we do. From a people perspective, ethical audit standards are based on the International Labour Organization (ILO). The ILO have core conventions, which cover essential principles and rights at work, these conventions are crucial for promoting social justice and decent work.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ethical standards, we specifically align our practices with the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI Base code). This code is based on the ILO convention and draws on specific commitments for employers. These standards of operating are assessed through external auditors. All our company policies reflect the very nature of the ILO conventions, and we consistently expect our colleagues and suppliers to adhere to these people standards.

Our colleagues have completed training and the training forms part of our induction for new starters.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# PLANET

We are committed to reducing our negative footprint and actively contributing to the restoration and regeneration



of ecosystems and communities. We aim to create a positive and lasting influence on the environment and society, embodying a holistic approach that goes beyond sustainability to foster regenerative practice.



## Environmental and Social governance

We are committed to the protection of the environment and reducing the impact of the business on the natural world. Our initiatives minimise the environmental impact of our business while maximising our social responsibility and striving for a regenerative impact.

We ensure environmental issues, including climate change, are considered in the operation of our business and the procurement of goods and services. We are proud to be a demand driven luxury manufacturer, weaving to order to meet customer demand, without producing unwanted stock.

These requirements are an integral part of every decision that we make. We believe in a responsible approach to product development, manufacturing, material supply and transportation – for example through reduced energy consumption, improved resource conservation and minimising our waste, carbon, and water footprints.

The responsibility steering group co-ordinate our sustainable development and environmental activity. The company has an appointed environmental management representative within a wider safety, health and environment committee. The environmental management team are specifically responsible for ensuring best practice throughout the company and that the company meets or exceeds all current and future European and national environmental legislative and regulatory requirements. They encourage and develop our employees, partners and stakeholders to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

Details of our Environmental General Arrangements (EGA) and Safe Operating Instructions (SOI) can be found within the Environmental Management System (EMS), which outlines company procedures related to best environmental practice. The accompanying EMS manual acts as an overview, including our policy and commitment, general responsibilities of the company for the implementation of the policy.

The environmental performance team monitor, measure and take action to reduce the carbon footprint of our activities and ensure our buildings and services can adapt to environmental change. The EPT monitor, manage and minimise our use of energy and water, and the amount of waste produced by us and partners to encourage greater reuse in recycling.

We ensure environmental, including climate change, criteria are considered in the procurement of goods and services. We commit to the 5R's; Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle and are a zero to landfill site. We consider environmental factors in decisions and activities including giving due consideration to environmental issues and energy performance in the design, refurbishment, and use of our buildings which includes exhibitions and activities. To ensure we meet our commitments, we undertake to periodically monitor and review our environmental performance and take corrective action where necessary. This policy will be reviewed annually.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Environmental Management and Performance

**Our environmental management team monitor and improve our company procedures to ensure we are compliant with best practice.**

Sudbury Silk Mills has an environmental management system (EMS) certified by OEKO-TEX STeP®. The EMS includes objectives, targets, and programmes for the improvement of the organisation's environmental performance. These targets are managed by the Environmental Performance Team who set objectives and coordinate working groups to ensure that potential improvements are planned and implemented to improve our overall environmental performance.

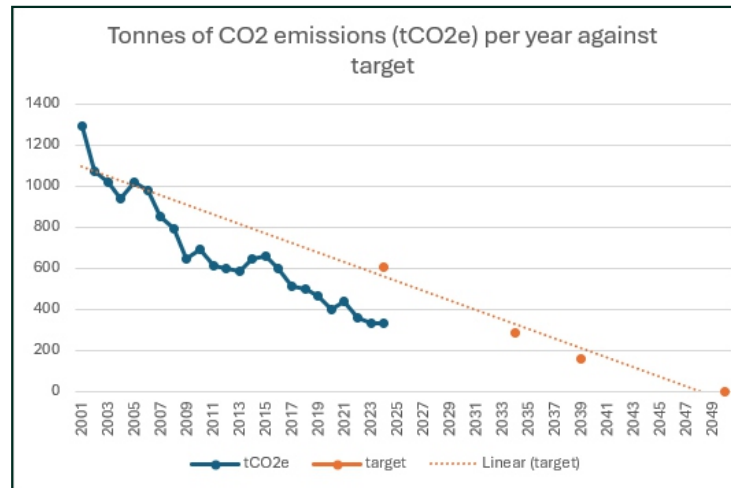
## Energy Efficiency Projects

- \* Lighting upgraded with energy efficient LED lighting, including motion sensors where appropriate.
- \* Finishing machine optimisation, which has resulted in a reduction of run time by 64%, projecting a yearly saving estimate of -6,840kg CO2 and -1.6% of total kg CO2e.
- \* Looms have a priority list, so weavers have visibility of the work required per loom to manage switch on/off times more efficiently.
- \* An independent third-party energy survey completed in December 2022 has informed further long-term reductions and investment plans.

## Carbon Footprint Reporting

We measure and take action to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint which is reported in our annual responsibility brochure. This is achieved through small and large-scale energy efficiency projects and process improvement.

We reduced our Scope 1 and Scope 2 real terms emissions by a further 0.8% in 2024, bringing our cumulative reduction (from 2001) to -74%. Continuing to be on track against our target.



\* We follow GHG protocols, measuring our Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint via the Carbon Trust for SME's tool \*

## Sustainable Energy Sourcing

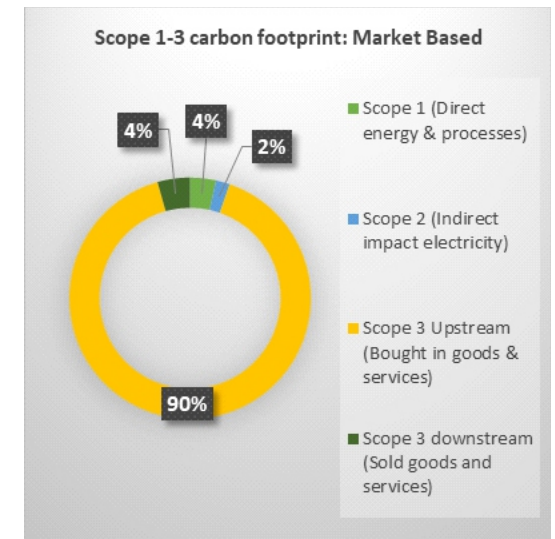
In 2023 we moved to a renewable electricity contract with Guarantees of Origin / REGO.

For all the electricity we use, our supplier guarantees that the same amount of energy from renewable sources will be fed into the National Grid. This is backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) and Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGOs) as proof.

In 2024 we installed 236 solar panels for on-site electricity generation.

## Scope 3 impact

As a manufacturer we recognise that our biggest impact is within Scope 3 and in 2023 we undertook our first full Scope 3 assessment, using market-based data and an independent consultant. Our Scope 3 calculation illustrated that 90% is from our supply chain. With this in mind, our current focus is supplier engagement, concentrating on our top five suppliers which account for around 80% of our stock yarn. By encouraging our suppliers to provide us data, this allows us to replace spend-based data with actual industry data. It also encourages them to investigate their supply chain and set future targets for energy reduction.



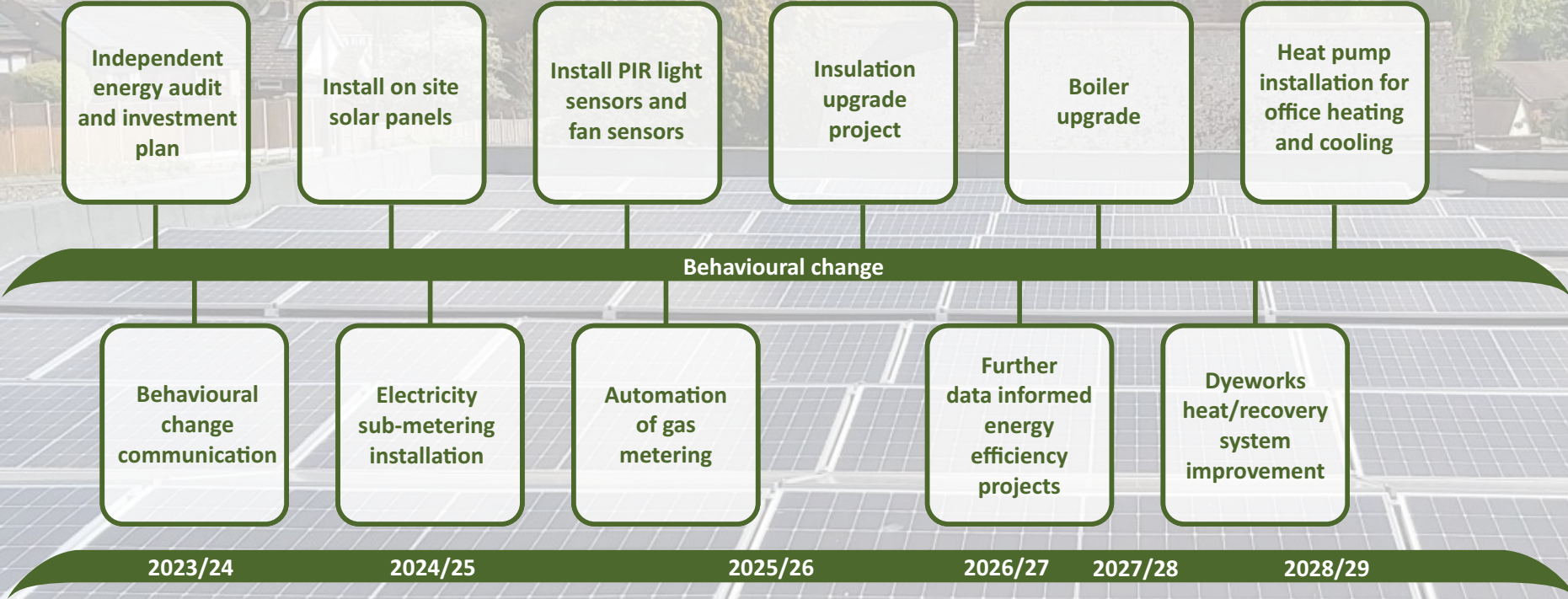
\*Our Scope 3 carbon footprint assessment was independently assessed and followed the UK Gov conversion factors 2022.\*



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Our Decarbonisation strategy

In 2024 we introduced our decarbonisation strategy, conducted behavioural change workshops, installed solar panels, and installed electricity sub-metering to inform future improvement projects.



PURPOSE & OUTCOME

**Purpose:**  
To provide an investment plan for reducing our CO2e and decarbonising

**Outcome:**  
Reduction in Scope 1 + 2 CO2e to make us a more responsible manufacturer  
Reduction in energy bills to maximise profitability



# Water

Textile production can use very large volumes of water, which is a precious resource and much of the global production takes place in regions of high-water stress.

## Water Stress

Sudbury Silk Mills does not directly draw from surface water body or groundwater source. Our third-party supplier is Anglian Water and the water originates from 425 boreholes, eight reservoirs and nine rivers.

The Aqueduct global rankings give an overall water risk score on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 being low and 5 being extremely high. East Anglia's score is 1-2 'Low-medium'.

Looking to the future, the Anglian Water region is vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change, temperature rise, reduction in summer rainfall, lower available water resources, increased flood risk and rising sea levels. The East of England is the driest region in the UK, receiving only around 600mm rainfall per annum, around two-thirds of the average for England and Wales.

## Water saving measures

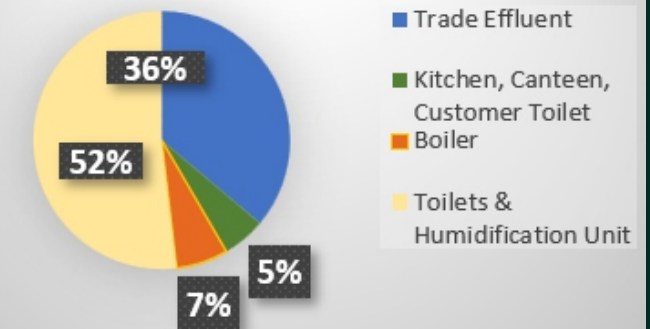
Our finishing machinery is bespoke-designed and custom-built to be low-or-no water usage. Instead, the system we have developed uses energy-efficient methods to generate heat and steam if required, which can be precisely controlled when delivered to the fabric, to achieve the desired effect.

As no chemicals or sizing agents are added in our production process, the fabrics require no washing or scouring, therefore minimising the amount of water required and generating no effluent or wastewater from our finishing processes.

## Water Consumption

The UK average employee water consumption is 50 litres per working day, which accounts for around 25% of our water usage. The remaining 75% is for production processes, mainly our onsite dyeworks and some comfort heating such as air conditioning.

2024 YTD Water Consumption M3



## Steps in reducing our water consumption.

- Planned preventative maintenance (PPM) on all equipment to minimise leaks and breakdowns.
- 2022:** Automatic Taps fitted in the main bathrooms
- 2023:** We undertook a full site drainage survey
- 2025:** Formalised our water policy
- 2026:** Water audit
- 2026:** Outline a water reduction strategy and targets
- 2027:** Implement improvement projects



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# High tech solutions for dyeworks sustainability



Our dye works uses state-of-the-art technology that oxidises 100% of the organic dyestuffs in the used dye liquor. This breaks them down into safe components that can be discharged through local sewer works to be further processed by local authorities. This is checked biannually by the local authorities to ensure it is in line with agreed permits.

Since the effluent generated is pre-treated to organic matter through oxidation process rather than filtration, there is no resultant waste or slurry to dispose of. The treated water is then ideally suited to be reprocessed and recycled via the municipal wastewater system.

Ultra-efficient pressurised cone-dyeing reduces the amount of water and dyestuffs required in the dyeing process.

Sudbury Silk Mills has pioneered the use of this technology within the textile industry, and we are always looking to make sure that we are on top of new developments and solutions to improve sustainability.

Our improvements for 2025 aim to target our systems used within the dyeworks with the plan to improve our productivity and quality of right-first-time dyeing. This will in turn benefit by allowing continuous improvements to be made to dye recipes in production, which will lead to a decrease in water usage per dyeing.



# Chemical Management



Our enhanced chemical management system replaces or reduces potentially hazardous chemicals used onsite, particularly in the dyeworks, and the handling, testing and storage of chemicals, along with checking, labelling and safe transport of incoming chemicals on site. It also monitors the management, control, and effective handling of chemicals to avoid spillage.

Our dyestuffs are fully REACH-compliant and entirely free of PFAS and Azo-class dyestuffs, with signed declarations from dyestuff and chemical suppliers in compliance with the ZDHC MRSL. Our chemical inventory and management systems determine that all our production chemical products meet the sustainability requirements of OEKO-TEX® STeP and ZDHC. For all chemicals, hazard and risk assessments are carried out and documented, plus annual audits are carried out.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

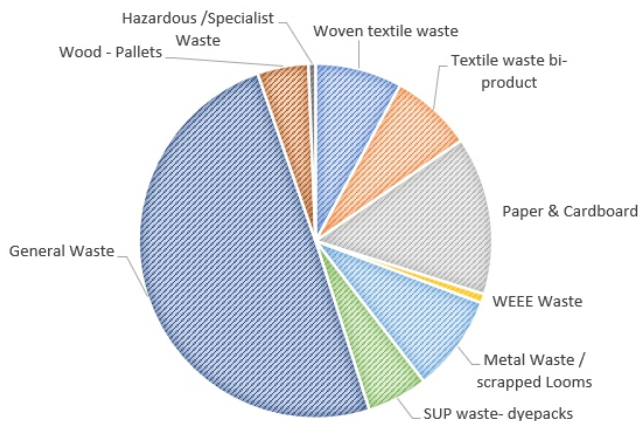
# Waste

Waste reduction follows the principals of the 5R's; Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose and Recycle. Making smart design choices, manufacturing right first time and recycling a greater proportion of general waste and textile by-product. We are proud to be a luxury manufacturer producing fabrics that will be treasured.

## Waste Reporting

We are a demand-driven manufacturer, which means we only use raw materials to weave fabric in a direct response to customer demand, which eliminates over production of stock. We remain a committed zero-landfill site. We reduced our overall waste collected by three tonnes / 5.8% from 2023 to 2024 by maximising internal reduce/reuse/repurposing routes. Approximately 72% of our waste collected is either repurposed, reused, or recycled, with the 28% remaining incinerated for energy.

## 2024 48.2 TONNES BY WASTE TYPE



## Waste Reduction - Quality

Fabric rejected at the inspection stage is down from 0.92% in 2023/24 to 0.76% in 2024/25 as we continue to make improvements.

Our Quality Management System and initiatives such as the quality circle, are designed to deliver a zero-textile waste target. The quality team remains focused on reducing and eliminating the root causes of waste generation, while optimising the channels available to repurpose any unavoidable textile waste.



## Waste Reduction - Textiles

- In 2022 our mill shop introduced a hierarchy to encourage re-use, repurposing and donating textiles for social benefit. In 2024/25 our mill shop donated 2296 metres of fabric, 270 kg of scrap fabrics, and 1287 kg of yarn to local and national community and educational groups.
- In 2023 our weaving floor implemented separate collection bins for selvedge waste, which are edges of yarn created during the weave process, and these are collected alongside woven waste in 2024 to be repurposed into insulation material.
- At the start of 2025 we completed our waste repurposing routes for zero destruction of textiles ahead of legislation, making us a zero-textile waste manufacturer.

## Waste Reduction - packaging and plastic

We are committed to reducing and eliminating single use plastics (SUPs) where possible within our production and packaging areas and are working through our biggest users in turn. Where no viable alternative yet exists to replace and we cannot reuse, we work hard to find routes to recycle.

- In December 2022 we introduced recycling for our waste dye-pack cones, these are collected and made into a polymer raw material for use in other industries.
- We are transitioning our plastic order wrapping to a product made from sugar cane called **Polyair™** which is 70% bio-based combined with their Monolite™ polymer. It is a thinner material but equally as strong, meaning less material is used per order. It also comes in two different widths so there is a reduction in excess used for wrapping orders to reduce waste. In addition, we keep this unbranded to encourage re-use.

- ✓ Bio-based polymer content
- ✓ 100% Carbon neutral
- ✓ Less poly raw material
- ✓ Full recyclable (Code LDPE 4)

- In 2025 we will trial changing our recyclable and FSC cellotape to a biodegradable cable tie.
- We have reduced our cardboard fabric tube usage through consolidation of sample orders, and source recyclable and FSC certified cardboard.

## Waste Reduction - Food waste

In 2025 we started segregating our food waste to reduce contamination of recyclable waste, to be incinerated for energy, and introduce behavioural change to separate this waste.

Next step will be to introduce food waste composting.



## Plastic Dye Pack - Case Study

### Yarn dyeing

Much of our yarn is dyed on a plastic package, a style of lightweight perforated cone that supports high performance dyeing at our vertical mill. Previously all our dye packs were placed in general waste and sorted by our partner.

### Separating from general waste

From the end of 2022 empty cones were collected separately onsite and taken out from the general skip.

### Recycled -circular system

The cones are broken down to create regrinds and plastic compounds. These are then used in subsequent manufacturing processes. This recycles our waste, and it creates a raw material that is used in other manufacturing processes.

### Annual Figures

Since 2022, 9.8 tonnes of plastic waste attributed to our yarn dye packs was diverted out of general waste and recycled via this method.



## Textile Waste - Case Study

### Selvage Waste

Our fabric has selvages, which are woven edges that ensure the integrity of the fabric. They help to eliminate issues such as bowing, skewing, and creasing and make the fabrics suitable for handling by our customers. Where the rapier passes yarn from one side of the loom to the other, loops of yarn are created at the edges, these are cut off during weaving and are a textile byproduct. We keep these 'tails' as short as possible on the loom but can also be weaving up to 12 colours of yarn at a time and multiple yarn types. Some of this we can distribute through our shop, as it has proved popular with crafters, but we needed to source a further method for repurposing.

### Separating from General waste for repurposing

By the end of 2023 we have had a separate onsite collection for all our selvage waste, after a successful introduction on the weaving floor this was rolled out to all departments, from fabric preparation through to sales.

### Woven Waste

In 2024 we formalised routes for our woven waste to follow the 5 R's of waste management, with repurposing the material as our baseline to divert all textile waste from our general waste. Bins in key areas have been introduced to segregate scrap textiles at source into the appropriate route.



# Supply chain traceability and Raw Material

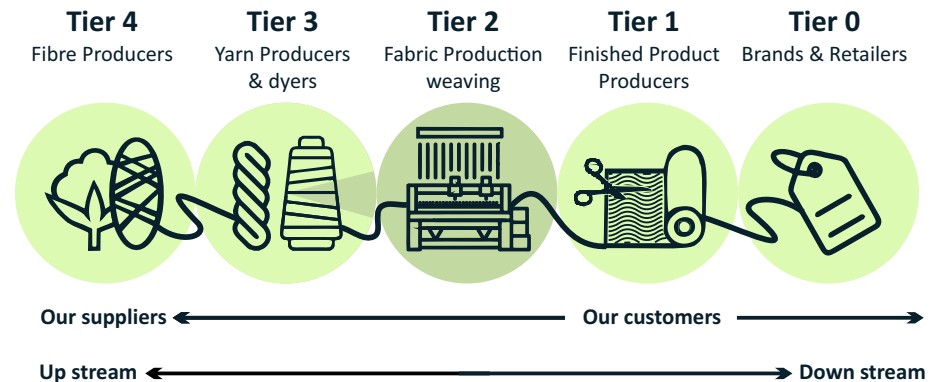
Our raw materials are carefully selected and our supply chain managed to offer a great diversity, quality and performance of the range of products we can produce. Working with our supply chain, we are able to provide this while understanding more of how the materials are manufactured to minimise the impact on the environment.

We approach all procurement, both internally and with our external suppliers, in a responsible and conscientious manner to minimise negative impacts and promote positive outcomes to both people and the environment. Considerations must adhere to stringent quality criteria, align with ethical, sustainable and socially conscious principles and keep pace with constantly evolving regulations and legislations.

We require our suppliers, both existing and new, to comply with our code of conduct which covers the requirements of environmental and social governance. Working in close partnership with our suppliers allows us to develop programmes of work to understand their systems, their own supply chain and develop improvement work to overcome challenges together.

As a Tier 2 textile manufacturer, our whole supply chain is mapped and audited to provide transparency of raw material supply to the country and region level. This includes both Tier 3 manufacturers (yarn spinning and dyeing) and Tier 4 sourcing (raw material production).

Our supplier investigations are designed to highlight any potential breaches or risk indicators related to human rights and working conditions. By encouraging this transparency with our suppliers, we are able to work together to overcome any possible risks through face-to-face visits and auditing processes.



# Supply chain traceability and Raw Material

In 2022 to aid with our supply chain roadmap, our traceability audits expanded to collect details of process and product certification in our value chain, such as OEKO-TEX®, GOTS (Global organic textile standard), Textile Exchange Standards, Organic and recycled materials.

From our engagement, our suppliers were able to map their own supply chains to understand what certification and compliance there was at each individual site and stage of the raw material production. It is important to remember that each supplier through the intricate supply chain map can have its own certifications or ways of working to show compliance relevant to their manufacturing.

Current work in our supply chain is aimed at further mapping within our Tier 4 suppliers to include farm and field within the already identified regions. This will increase our visibility of regenerative agriculture, biodiversity considerations and ethical working practices.



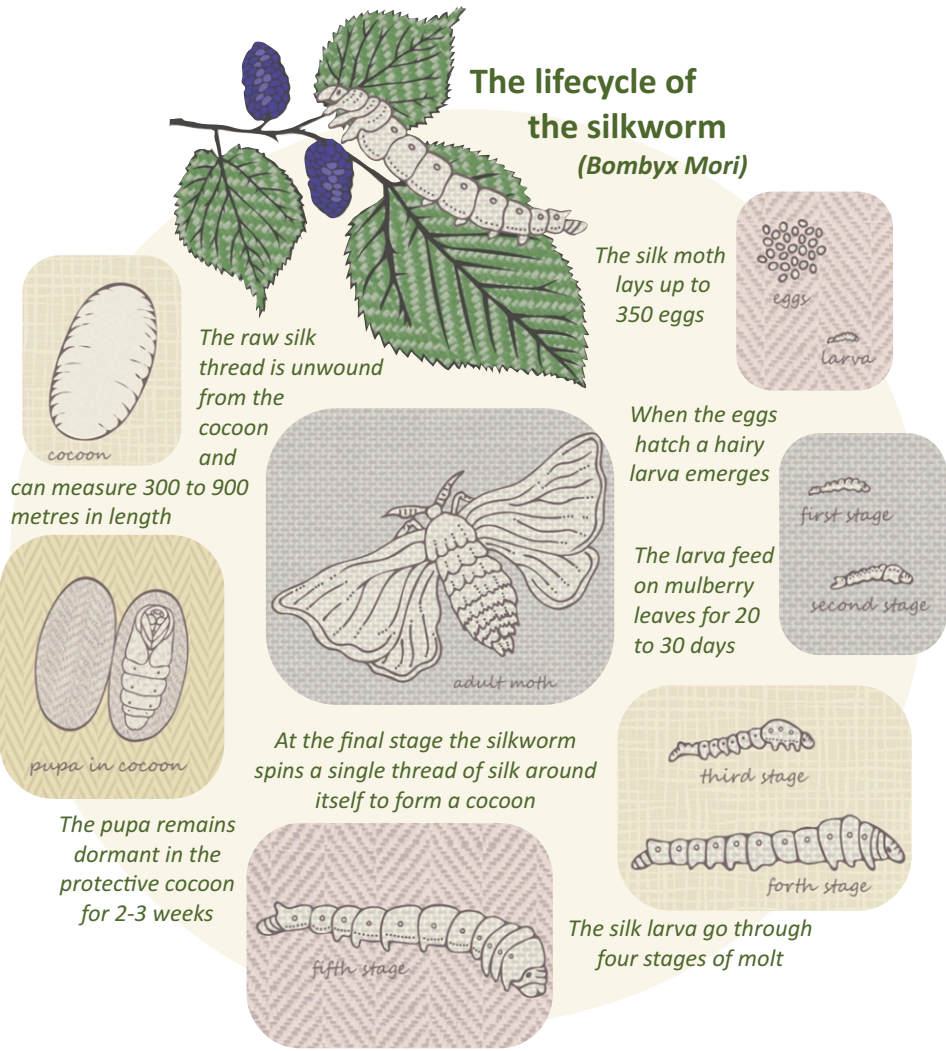
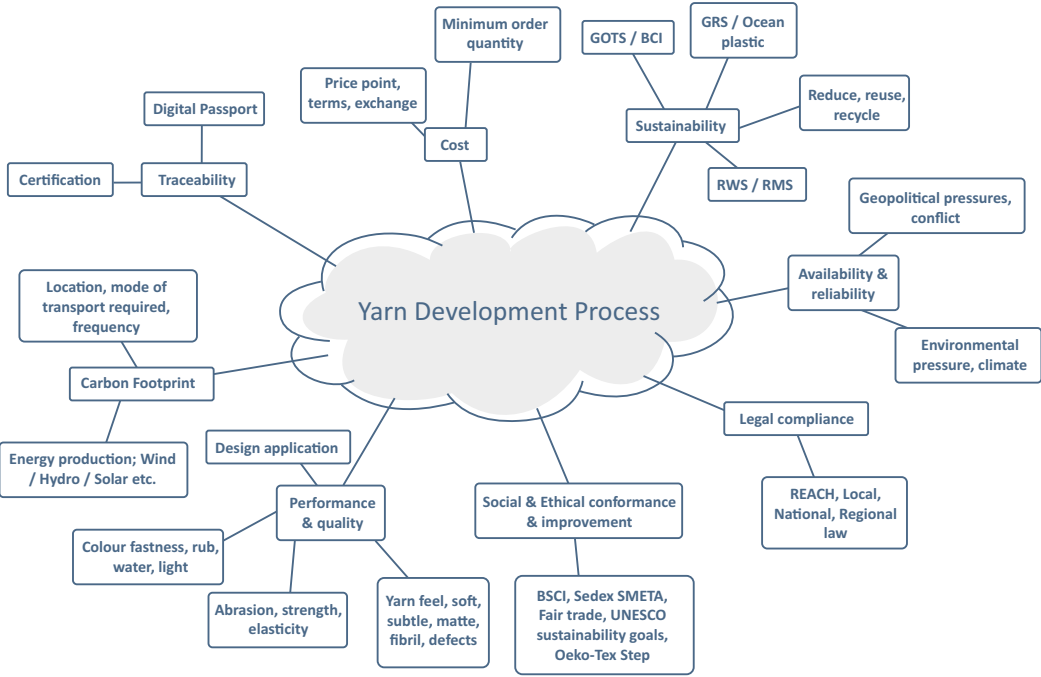
# Supply chain traceability and Raw Material

## Raw materials

Responsibly sourced yarn choices have many considerations; animal welfare and husbandry, regenerative agriculture and biodiversity, water use, chemical and pesticide use, social and welfare conditions of producers and workers; all while retaining the supply reliability and quality.

We offer our customers access to a wide range of stocked yarns in a diverse range of fibres, which often come from multiple global suppliers. We follow a rigorous due diligence process when we introduce a supplier. They must commit to uphold and adhere to our supplier code of conduct. Where appropriate we undertake regular audits and site visits.

We check if any of our supply chain activities are in sensitive and/or protected biodiversity areas through **protectedplanet.net** or within a high-risk country in terms of human rights via the human freedom index.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Natural Fibres

Natural fibres are biodegradable — they break down in nature and release nutrients back into the soil. In this way, these fibres are inherently circular as they have a natural place in the carbon cycle.

## Animal Hair

### Traceability: Country and region

Our preferred sources for animal hair fibre (wool, cashmere, angora, mohair) are those certified by Textile Exchange Standards, such as RWS (Responsible Wool Standard). This is certified to yarn level; however the woven fabric is not RWS certified. As part of our push towards RWS at yarn level, we are progressing to full certification across the range, with over 85% of our stock certified and the remainder expected to transition by the end of 2025.

Wool is the most common animal fibre used in the fashion and textile industry. It's natural, breathable and has good insulation and thermo-regulating properties. It reacts to changes in the body temperature to keep the wearer warmer when it is cold, and cooler when it is warm. Wool is also odour and wrinkle resistant, which means that woollen clothing doesn't need to be washed as often as other fibre types, therefore saving water and energy.

A sheep produces a new fleece every year, making it naturally renewable. All of our stocked wool range is sourced from non-mulesed (a shearing process often used on lambs) to ensure better standards of animal welfare.

## Responsible Wool Standard

This means we will have full transparency of where the wool fibre originated, as well as RWS being the industry benchmark driving improvement in animal welfare protection, land health preservation and social welfare.

## Animal welfare protection

This covers the FIVE FREEDOMS of animal welfare such as freedom from hunger, discomfort and distress.

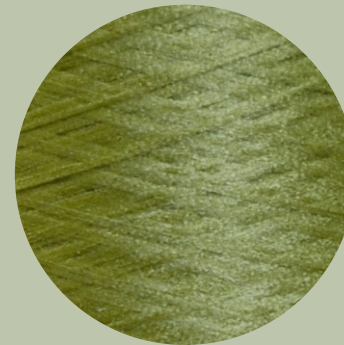
## Land health preservation

RWS farms use progressive methods of land management, protecting soil health, biodiversity and native species.

## Social welfare

Ensuring that workers health, safety and working conditions are compliant.

<https://textileexchange.org/responsible-wool-standard/>



**Wool** - our most popular wool range is available in a beautiful palette of 28 shades, popular with both interior and fashion clientele. It is RWS certified.

**Mohair** - 17 of the colours in our range are Responsible Mohair Standard (RMS) certified. 2 colours, made from a special melange fibre are not yet available as RMS due to the nature of the production of the yarn.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Natural Fibres

## Silk

### Traceability: Country and region, to reeling mill

Silk has been prized for its luxurious properties for thousands of years and it can be dyed to create an incredible quality of colour. Silk's natural prism structure makes it great at reflecting light. It is also breathable, hypoallergenic, and known for its thermal properties, being cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Silk is naturally self-extinguishing, which means it has excellent natural fire-retardant properties without the application of chemicals. Our fabrics are either pure silk or woven as blends with other natural fibres.

Our affinity with silk is deeply rooted in the origins and heritage of the business and it remains one of our specialities today. We have long established relationships with our key silk suppliers, and these are at the core of establishing our sustainability strategy and roadmap in a partnership setting. Some processing has, over time, become GOTS-certified, and we are well advanced with mapping source traceability. As a business we can trace our silk back through the supply chain to localised region, to reeling mill. This level of transparency through our supply chain enables us to monitor and rigorously assess any negative process that could be involved in this yarn type.

All our raw silk is sourced from China (Guangxi, Hangzhou, Jiangsu, Sichuan, Shandong, Yunnan, Zhejiang) from the domesticated Mulberry Bombyx mori silk moth.

## Cotton

### Traceability: Country and region

Cotton is breathable, making it popular for keeping cool in humid climates and has a dry handle which is popular with furnishing customers, without the creasing of linen/flax.

We source cotton grown or processed in Egypt, Australia, Pakistan, Italy and USA. When considering BCI and GOTS cotton, we take into consideration the sustainability of the crop, and not just the yarn type.

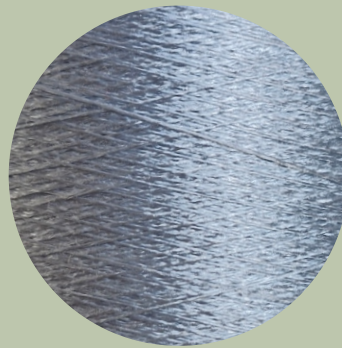
The reason for this is because until a crop is stable in its offering and quality, you can negatively impact sustainability by introducing unnecessary waste. We continue to explore GOTS, BCI and other forms of certified cotton as part of our yarn offering and we are planning to increase these proportions throughout 2025.

**GOTS Certified Slubbed Cotton:** Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) is the worldwide leading textile processing standard for organic fibres, which also includes ecological and social welfare criteria.

The choice of GOTS cotton for this new yarn helps to reinforce our companies environmental and ethical values, as the GOTS standard assesses everything from the chemical inputs being used to the ethical treatment of workers.

This yarn is available in its natural shade and has a beautiful soft handle, creating interesting slubbed textures.

For further information on GOTS please follow this link: [The Standard - GOTS \(global-standard.org\)](https://global-standard.org/)



## Linen/flax

### Traceability: Country and region

Made from fibres that are sourced from the stems of flax plants, linen is three times stronger than cotton. Both linen and flax are derived from the flax plant but generally linen is spun from the longer fibres. Progress has been made in this area to ensure that all linen yarn purchased will be certified to either GOTS or Masters of Linen standard, depending on the supplier's chosen certification.

# Man-Made Fibres

## Man-made Fibres - Regenerated cellulose

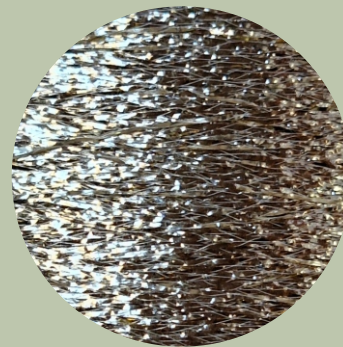
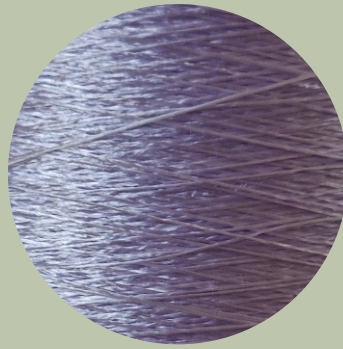
Fibres derived from natural polymers are biodegradable—they break down in nature and release nutrients back into the soil.

## Man-made Fibres - Synthetics and microfibres

Oil-based synthetic fibre production carries a significant environmental cost, the fibres do not biodegrade and are responsible for micro-plastics. However, their performance properties are unrivalled which extends the life of fabrics and may reduce consumption.

Micro-plastic shedding and highwater impact come from the washing during the lifecycle of a product. Our furnishing fabrics are not designed to be washed and we encourage spot cleaning and responsible dry cleaning.

For our fashion fabrics synthetics are woven in blends with natural fibres and therefore post-consumer washing is minimised to aid the protection of more fragile fibres. With luxury garments, airing after use, washing on very low heat, hand washing and spot cleaning are all encouraged.



## Viscose/rayon

All our pure (unblended) rayon and viscose is FSC Certificated and Canopy Hot Button Evaluated.

## Viscose flax blend

In 2023 we started to evaluate our blended fibres such as our popular viscose/flax blend. This is popular with furnishing manufacturers due to its strength, slub character and subtle lustre. This yarn provides a robust, natural alternative to synthetics for higher performance and higher abrasion fabrics for interiors. The viscose element of this yarn is Canopy certified.

Through a collaborative AKT project, we were able to explore alternative options to viscose use in the form of a Tencel or lyocell replacement. Work continues on this to ensure that we can consider a more traceable option without any loss in quality of the final woven fabric

## Polyester and Recycled Polyester

Our aim is to phase out the use of virgin polyester where possible and opt for recycled alternatives. Our certified recycled polyester weft range accounts for 10% of current consumption and yarn availability. We have set a goal to achieve 100% by the end of 2025.

## Recycled Lurex Yarn

Made of 50% post-consumer recycled polyester, which is made from post-industrial waste such as plastic bottles. The remaining 50% is regular metallised polyester, to achieve a good level of lustre. The range consists of six shades in total and used to add a metallic highlight or flourish to fabrics.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# PROSPERITY

We believe that by looking after our people, our customers, our suppliers and our local community, we can foster improvements in social conditions and the environment. We aim to create wealth responsibly and sustainably and determine where this wealth is best invested and distributed.



**Over 2000m**

fabric donated nationally  
to Schools, Universities,  
Craft groups and  
Care homes

**Supported**

more than 10 local  
well being and community  
organisations

**Took part in**

20  
local events

## Charity Partnership



By choosing one dedicated charity partner we believe we can establish a strong relationship and make the most meaningful difference.

Through consultation with our entire team, our chosen charity partnership Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS) are the main beneficiaries of our fundraising activity.

Our fundraising has delivered sufficient funds for 10 defibrillators and helped raise awareness. In return SARS have delivered CPR training to 20 people from Sudbury Silk Mills.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

# Charity events and collections

Our staff members have a passion for supporting a wide range of local and national charitable organisations, through events to raise funds or by volunteering their time. Recent activities include anything from bake sales to collecting goods for local food banks and Christmas boxes for children.

Many of our colleagues also take on their own charitable endeavours for causes with personal significance and we always undertake to support these efforts wherever possible.

In addition to SARS, in 2024 this included support for:

- EACH East Anglian Children's Hospice
- Great Ormond Street Hospital
- Macmillan
- Fire Fighters Charity
- Fashion and Textile Children

## Community support

We support local wellbeing and community organisations and a range of children's and adult's sport groups locally, including kit and equipment sponsorship.

These wonderful organisations do amazing work and support the community, largely on a voluntary basis.

- Sudbury Rugby Club
- Cornard Bowls Club
- Common Lands Charity
- Friends of Wells Hall School
- Storehouse Foodbank



## Education

Our schools programme helps local secondary school pupils to build skills and prepare for work. This could be helping with CV's, offering mock interview experiences or an insight into the diverse career opportunities within our business.

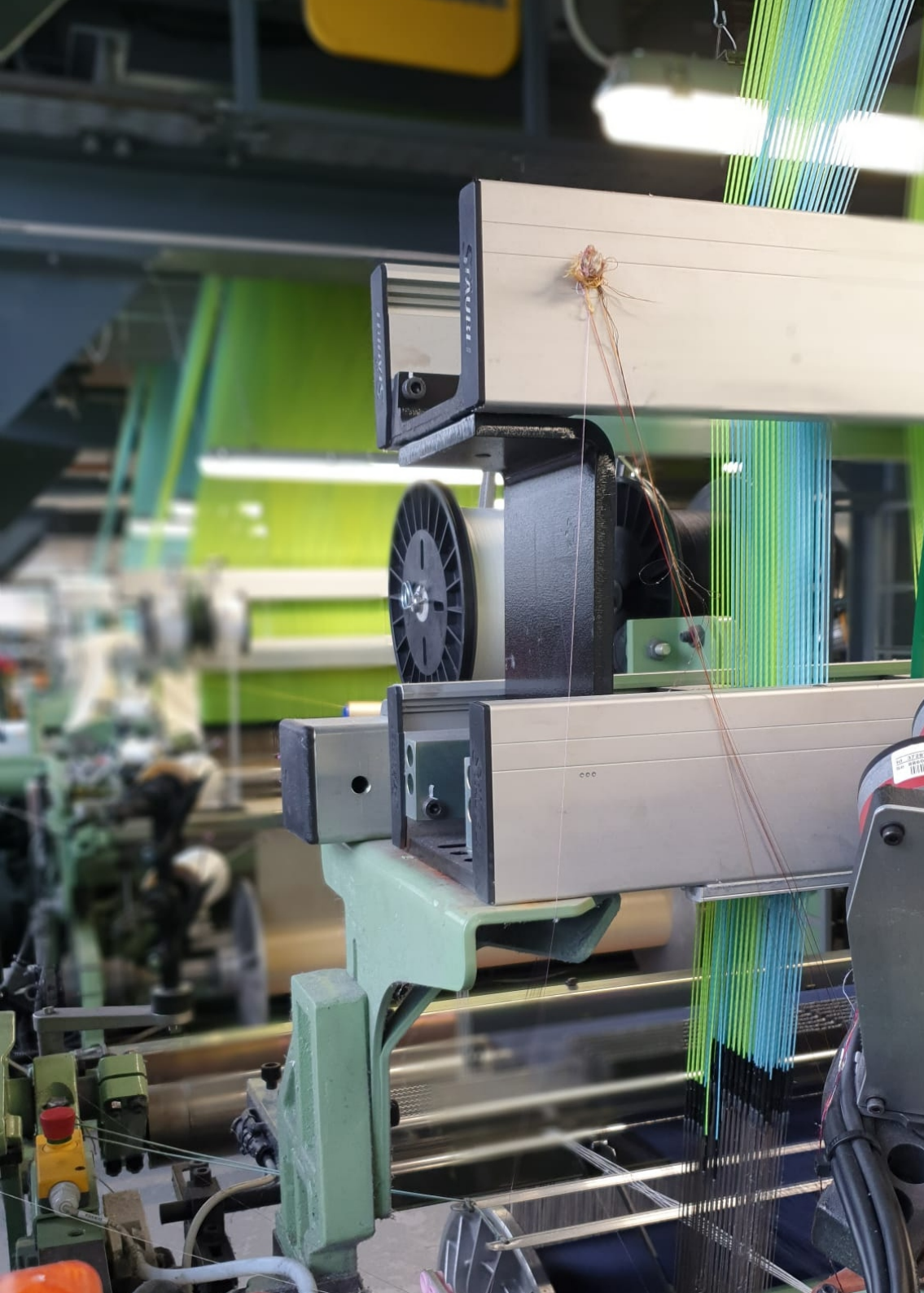
Our university programme helps graduates forge lasting links with industry and gain vital commercial experience.

We have developed programmes to connect with national and international further education students, setting industry specific projects, collaborations and sponsored awards with partner universities at degree and masters levels.

We support the Worshipful Company of Weavers Textile Conference for 2nd year students, giving an insight to industry and access to mills, to support student development and forge industry relationships. We also support their entry to work scheme which offers full time, fully paid employment for new graduates.

We have strong links with the UK Fashion and Textiles association (UKFT) which is the largest network for fashion and textile companies in the UK. We bring together designers, manufacturers, suppliers, agents, educators and retailers to promote their businesses and our industry, both in the UK and throughout the world.





## Regional and textile heritage

We understand the value in supporting local and national projects to promote Sudbury's silk heritage, including initiatives around the Sudbury Silk Festival, giving talks to local interest groups, and supporting the Gainsborough House Gallery. We recognise the importance of our communities for the success of the business, and we appreciate the benefit to our local community of retaining employment in Sudbury; sharing the financial success with our staff; and acting responsibly to restore and rejuvenate our local area.

## Investment in industry-leading technologies and innovation

Investment in technologies to ensure that the business is competitive is vital to meet the future needs of the markets, so we ensure that our equipment will enhance the capability and further the ambition to create a positive environmental impact. Our latest weaving machines were enhanced and specially adapted with grant-funding support from Business Transition to Net Zero, thanks to the generous support of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

We use Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to automate repetitive, rule-based tasks within our many business processes. So, the boring things that our people don't like doing but RPA loves! It mimics the actions a human would take when interacting with digital systems, such as entering data, triggering responses, communicating with other systems and much more.



SUDBURY SILK MILLS

**This report underscores our unwavering commitment to accountability and responsible practices. By diligently adhering to our defined responsibilities, we not only uphold the trust of our people, customers and stakeholders, but also contribute positively to our community.**



**SUDBURY SILK MILLS**

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